

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BELGRA 05865 301713Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 2200

S E C R E T BELGRADE 5865

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: MGDS
TAGS: PFOR, MASS, YO
SUBJECT: US ARMS TRANSFER POLICY TOWARDS YUGOSLAVIA

REF: A/ STATE 204278 B/ BELGRADE 5168

1. FINAL DRAFT A MARKED IMPROVEMENT EVEN OVER FINE FIRST DRAFT. WE CONTINUE, HOWEVER, TO DISAGREE WITH THE STATEMENT ON PAGE 13 THAT THE "US HAS BEEN RELATIVELY FORTHCOMING TO YUGOSLAV ARMS TRANSFER REQUESTS IN THE PAST", AND SUGGEST THAT THE RECENT RECORD PROVES OTHERWISE. NOR DO WE AGREE--PAGE 4--THAT PART OF OUR BASIC REPEAT BASIC POLITICAL AND MILITARY INTEREST IN YUGOSLAVIA IS MAINTENANCE OF ITS NON-ALIGNMENT. WE CAN "UNDERSTAND" YUGOSLAVIA'S NON-ALIGNMENT AND EVEN SUPPORT IT WITHIN LIMITS AND SO LONG AS IT IS TRULY NONALIGNED. BUT YUGOSLAVIA'S "POLITICAL UNITY" APPEARS TO US FAR MORE IMPORTANT TO US INTERESTS (SO LONG, OF COURSE, AS YUGOSLAVIA REMAINS OUTSIDE THE SOVIET BLOC). BUT THERE ARE BUT NITPIKS TO WHAT IS ESSENTIALLY A FIRST-RATE PAPER.

2. WHILE OPTION I HAD TO BE ENUCIATED, THIS EMBASSY IS OF THE VIEW THAT IT IS NOT IN OUR INTERESTS TO CURTAIL THE ALREADY LESS THAN SATISFACTORY ARMS TRANSFER

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RELATIONSHIP. MAINTENANCE OF THE STATUS QUO (OPTION II) IN OUR VIEW, IS EQUALLY UNWISE, SINCE WE BELIEVE THE CURRENT POLICY IS ESSENTIALLY NO POLICY, AND HAS MANIFESTLY FAILED TO PRODUCE ANY WORTHWHILE RESULTS. ON THE OTHER HAND, TO ADOPT OPTION IV (SUBSTANTIAL EXPANSION) WOULD BE BETTING MORE ON THE YUGOSLAV HORSE THAN PAST PERFORMANCE OR FUTURE PROSPECTS MERIT. WHILE YUGOSLAVIA IS

CLEARLY IMPORTANT TO THE U.S. WE OUGHT NOT KID OURSELVES
THAT IT IS FOR SALE.

3. THUS, THIS EMBASSY STRONGLY SUPPORTS OPTION III,
WHICH RECOGNIZES THE VERY REAL AND IMPORTANT U.S. NATIONAL
INTEREST IN A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WITH THE YUGOSLAV MILITARY,
WHILE AT THE SAME TIME ACCEPTING THAT THERE ARE LIMITS TO
WHAT ANY ARMS TRANSFER POLICY CAN ACHIEVE HERE AND REAL RISKS
IN OVERDOING IT. THE OPTION IS RESPONSIVE TO HIGH LEVEL
YUGOSLAV INTEREST IN INCREASED AVAILABILITIES OF SOPHISTICATED
EQUIPMENT, WHILE PROVIDING FOR IMPROVEMENT IN ADMINISTRATIVE
PROCEDURES (THEREBY HELPING TO AMELIORATE MUCH OF THE
DISAPPOINTMENT ARISING FROM THE PRESENT POLICY). ADDITIONALLY,
WE WOULD BE IN A BETTER POSITION TO MEASURE RESULTS THAN BY
DASHING HEADLONG INTO A SUBSTANTIALLY EXPANDED RELATIONSHIP.
EAGLEBURGER

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NNN

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